

Decentralisation – Human Resource Policy
Promotion and Recruitment

Department of Finance – position paper - 7 December, 2004

Introduction

1. The document on human resource policy discussed between the management and staff sides before the introduction of the CAF said the following about recruitment and promotion issues:

Promotion

28. Promotions and related human resources practices must take account of decentralisation and the fact that, in a decentralised service, acceptance of a post whether as a result of promotion or of open recruitment is conditional on acceptance of working in a particular location.

29. However, in the short term, there are complex issues to be addressed in regard to promotion. It is proposed to begin discussions with the staff side with the aim of agreeing appropriate arrangements.

Recruitment

30. In the medium to longer-term, it will be necessary to consider the development of [a] regional recruitment systems building on the existing regional arrangements and [b] regional promotion structures across Departments. In accordance with the agreement in *Sustaining Progress*, the Minister for Finance will, in conjunction with the Civil Service Commission, put forward proposals for the development of such structures.

31. Acceptance that a post is in a specific location and will be occupied for a defined minimum period will become a condition of employment for all new entrant staff with effect from a date to be determined by the Minister for Finance.

In the light of this, and following the receipt of applications under the CAF, this position paper sets out the Department of Finance's proposed approach to recruitment and promotion in the context of the next phase of decentralisation.

Principles

2. To support the early and efficient completion of the decentralisation programme, the Department of Finance proposes that all future vacancies in general service grades should be filled by persons willing to move to a decentralised location until all decentralised posts (and any consequent vacancies in existing provincial offices) have been filled. Accordingly, the following arrangements will apply,

(i) In the case of general service grades (and agreed equivalents),

(a) posts in decentralising units on the list at Appendix A (which may be extended at a later date), and

(b) vacancies in existing provincial offices arising as a result of officers transferring to the units at (a)

will be filled in the first instance by applicants under the Central Applications Facility (CAF).

(ii) All future general service vacancies across the service will be filled in the first instance, whether by promotion or recruitment, by officers willing to make a commitment to transfer to one of the remaining unfilled posts under (i) (a) or (b).

For reasons of practicality, efficiency and equity this requires that all these promotions be made on the basis of interdepartmental competition. Location sub-panels would apply in the case of both promotion and recruitment.

(iii) The vacancies in units remaining in Dublin resulting under (i) and (ii) above will be filled by officers in Departments with decentralising units who are opting to remain in Dublin and who cannot be accommodated within their existing Departments. They will be selected initially by seeking volunteers and then as necessary on the “last in first out” principle. Officers being so redeployed will be given the opportunity to express preferences for where they might be assigned (but it will not be possible to guarantee that it will be possible to meet these preferences in all cases.)

(iv) These arrangements will apply until the necessary number of posts at (i) (a) and (b) have been filled.

(v) The position regarding departmental and professional grades will be discussed further.

3. A copy of the list of locations referred to in 2 is attached at Appendix A. It should be noted that this list of priority locations will increase as more locations are identified with the potential to move early under the programme. As further locations are identified, these arrangements in relation to promotion and recruitment will apply to those Departments and Offices.

Proposed mechanism - promotion

4. Where a vacancy arises in a Department which is decentralising in full or in part, the first step will be to establish if there is someone at the same grade who has applied under the CAF to go to the relevant location and who has not yet transferred into the Department. If so, that person will be offered the post on transfer and the vacancy will be transferred to that officer’s Department. The vacancy in that Department will also be filled in accordance with these proposed arrangements.

5. Where there is no application under the CAF for a transfer to the location concerned, and where the Department has not yet filled all its decentralising posts at that level, the post will be filled by promoting an officer who makes a formal commitment to move to that location. The consequential vacancy will then be filled under the same arrangement.

6. Where the vacancy arises in a Department which is not decentralising or which has already filled all its decentralising posts at that level, the vacancy will be transferred to a decentralising Department which has not yet filled all its decentralising posts at that

grade. That post and the consequential vacancies will then be filled in accordance with the arrangements at paragraphs 4 and 5.

7. When a vacancy is transferred from one Department to another and the post in the second Department is filled by promotion, it will result in the first Department having a deficit of one post and the second Department having a surplus post. These “deficit” and “surplus” posts will be used to address the position of staff who want to remain in Dublin but who will have to transfer to other Departments as there will no longer be posts available in Dublin in their existing Departments.

8. All promotions will be made by way of inter-departmental competition. Applicants will be asked to list the decentralised locations they are willing to transfer to and location or regional sub-panels will be established.

9. Each Department will identify the number of staff in each grade who will have to move to another Department to remain in Dublin.

Existing provincial locations

10. Parallel arrangements will be applied in the case of existing provincial offices to facilitate the release of staff from those offices who have applied to transfer to new decentralised locations.

11. A vacancy arising in a provincial office will be filled, where possible, by the transfer of someone from Dublin who has applied to move to that location. Failing that, the vacancy will be filled by promoting someone serving in Dublin who is willing to move to that location. The consequential vacancy would then fall to be filled in accordance with the arrangements set out here, that is, the cycle would start again at the next lower grade.

Recruitment

12. In the case of recruitment grades, each Department will identify the likely shortfall for its decentralised locations based on the number of posts decentralising and the level of CAF applications. Departments will also identify present and projected vacancies over the period to the actual move.

13. Departments will be asked to ensure that **all** the required vacancies are filled by the recruitment of persons who make a formal commitment to work in the decentralised location.

14. Competitions for all posts will be held on this basis. Formal agreement to work in the new decentralised location will be an explicit condition of all recruitment.

Appendix A – DIG Report – 24 November, 2004

Table 1 - First phase - Civil Service		
Location	Organisation	Posts
Clonakilty	Department of Communications, Marine & Natural Resources	91
Drogheda	Department of Social and Family Affairs HQ[1]	215
Drogheda	Department of Communications, Marine & Natural Resources	47
Killarney	Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism HQ	141
Kilrush	Revenue Commissioners	50
Listowel	Revenue Commissioners	50
Newcastle West	Revenue Commissioners	50
Limerick	Department of Foreign Affairs	125
Longford	Irish Prisons Service	159
Loughrea	Department of Transport	40
Newbridge	Department of Defence HQ	202
Portlaoise	Department of Agriculture HQ[2]	392
Sligo	Department of Social & Family Affairs	100
Trim	Office of Public Works HQ	333
Tullamore	Department of Finance	135
Total		2,130

Table 2 – Potential “early movers” – Civil Service		
Location	Organisation	Posts
Athlone	Department of Education & Science	108
Carlow	Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment	313
Carrick-on-Shannon	Department of Social & Family Affairs	220
Knock Airport	Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs HQ	164
Mullingar	Department of Education and Science HQ	299
Wexford	Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government HQ	258
Total		1,362

1 Number shown does not include 262 IT staff.

2 Number shown does not include 203 IT staff